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C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 000594

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF, AF/E AND EUR
CJTTF-HOA PASS MARCENT DJIBOUTI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/21/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [FR](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: NEW FRENCH MFA/DEFENSE JOINT STATEMENT IS ATTEMPT
TO CALM DJIBOUTIAN WATERS

REF: A. DJIBOUTI 590 B. DJIBOUTI 585

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARGUERITA D. RAGSDALE.
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (U) Djibouti's media is giving broad coverage to a joint statement issued April 20 by France's Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs on the controversial Judge Bernard Borrel affair, involving the state of Djibouti (see reftels). The text, unofficially translated by Embassy Djibouti, is as follows:

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"Within the framework of the investigation underway into the death of Judge Borrel, some documents classified "secret-defense" have recently been declassified. This measure had been requested by the Djiboutian authorities themselves. It has allowed these documents to be added to the case file. Contrary to assertions put forward by diverse organs of the press, nothing in these documents permit one to conclude that the Djiboutian authorities are involved. Any other statement does not conform to reality."

[1](#)2. (C) The text of the statement is along the lines of the language France's Ambassador Philippe Selz had proposed to his government, and that he said he believed might help calm matters between the countries. (See reftel A). Selz telephoned Ambassador April 21 to state that "the storm is over," at least for now. He told Ambassador, and French General Gerard Pons, Commander of French Forces stationed in Djibouti subsequently confirmed to her, that relations between Djibouti and France are returning to normal. Both said that earlier, French military forces had resumed their routine interactions with Djiboutian forces.

[1](#)3. (C) Comment: The concern of French officials here is that real control over the case's publicity ultimately rests with Borrel's widow. She is not likely to keep the matter low-key and we cannot predict future Djiboutian government reactions to any new revelations in this tragic case. End comment.
RAGSDALE